

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for intermittently accessing and retrieving data contained in a business data database, comprising the steps of:

- A) receiving an indication to begin accessing records in the business data database;
- B) reading an entry in the business data database that includes business data;
- C) indexing at least a portion of the business data in an index;
- D) advancing to a next entry in the business data database; and
- E) repeating steps B-D.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

pausing for a predetermined period of time prior to advancing to the next entry in the business data database.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from a user indicating a desired rate of pause between finishing accessing a first entry and advancing to the next entry in the business data database; and

setting the period of time to pause between entries based upon the indicated rate.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the steps of:

detecting a current load on the business data database; and
adjusting the rate of advance through the business data database based on the detected load.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising the steps of:

decreasing the rate of advance if the current load is above a first threshold level; and
returning to the indicated rate when the load drops below the first threshold level.

6. The method of claim 4 further comprising the steps of:

increasing the rate of advance through the business data database if the current load is below a second threshold level; and
returning to the indicated rate when the load exceeds the second threshold level.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising, creating a key in the index for the entry in the business data database, wherein the key corresponds to an identifier for the entry in the business data database.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the step of indexing copies the at least a portion of the entry in the business data database to the key in the index.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the step of indexing copies to the key a time stamp indicating a date the entry was last modified in the business data database.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising, upon reaching a last entry in the business data database, returning to the first entry in the business data database and repeating steps B-D.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of:

marking in the index a time stamp indicating when the first entry in the business data database was accessed.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of:

marking in the index a second time stamp indicating when the first entry in the business data database was accessed for a second time.

13. The method of claim 12 when the business data database is accessed for a third or subsequent time, further comprising the steps of:

replacing the first time stamp in the indexes with the time stamp contained in the second time stamp; and

marking in the second time stamp a time stamp indicating when the first entry in the business data database was accessed for a third or subsequent time.

14. The method of claim 12 further comprising the steps of:

prior to indexing the entry, comparing the time stamp of the entry with the first time stamp;

if the time stamp of the entry is earlier than the first time stamp, then performing step D;

if the time stamp of the entry is later than the first time stamp, then performing step C.

15. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from a user indicating the portions of the entry to be copied to the index; and
indexing that portion of each entry to the index.

16. The method of claim 15 further wherein indexing comprises:

replacing the entry in the index with the business data in the business data database.

17. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from a user to stop accessing entries in the business data database; and
stopping the accessing of entries in response to the received stop indication.

18. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from a user to display the progress of the method; and
displaying to the user the progress of the method through the business data database.

19. A computer readable medium containing computer executable instructions that, when executed, cause a computer to perform the steps of:

receiving an indication to start accessing records in a business data database that includes business data having a plurality of fields;

presenting to a user an interface, wherein the user provides an indication of a portion of the plurality of fields to be indexed for each of the entries in the business data database;

indexing the indicated portion of the plurality of fields for a first entry in the business data database;

pausing for a predetermined period of time;

advancing to a next entry in the business data database;

indexing the indicated portion of the next entry in the business data database; and

repeating instructions E and F.

20. The computer readable medium of claim 19 further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

receiving an indication from the user indicating a desired rate of pause between finishing accessing a current entry and advancing to the next entry in the business data database; and

setting the period of time to pause between entries based upon the indicated rate.

21. The computer readable medium of claim 20 further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

detecting a current load on the business data database; and

adjusting the rate of advance through the business data database based on the detected load.

22. The computer readable medium of claim 21 further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

decreasing the rate of advance if the current load is above a first threshold level; and

returning to the indicated rate when the load drops below the first threshold level.

23. The computer readable medium of claim 21 further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

increasing the rate of advance through the business data database if the current load is below a second threshold level; and returning to the indicated rate when the load exceeds the second threshold level.

24. The computer readable medium of claim 19 wherein upon reaching a last entry in the business data database, further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

returning to the first entry in the business data database and repeating steps B-G.

25. The computer readable medium of claim 19 further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

marking in the index a time stamp indicating when the first entry in the business data database was accessed.

26. The computer readable medium of claim 25 further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

marking in the index a second time stamp indicating when the first entry in the business data database was accessed for a second time.

27. The computer readable medium of claim 26 wherein when the business data database is accessed for a third or subsequent time, further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

replacing the first time stamp in the indexes with the time stamp contained in the second time stamp; and

marking in the second time stamp a time stamp indicating when the first entry in the business data database was accessed for a third or subsequent time.

28. The computer readable medium of claim 27 further comprising instructions to perform the steps of:

prior to indexing a current entry, comparing a time stamp for the entry with the first time stamp;

if the time stamp of the entry is earlier than the first time stamp, then performing step D;

if the time stamp of the entry is later than the first time stamp, then performing step C.

29. A free text search system for use in a business data database, comprising:

- a crawler component configured to intermittently access and index data stored in a plurality of records in the business data database;
- a speed control module configured to control a rate of access of the records by the crawler component;
- a user interface component configured to provide access to the crawler component and the speed control module;
- an index table storing data received from the crawler component;
- a search engine component configured to search the index table in response to a user query.

30. The free text search system of claim 29 wherein the index table comprises a plurality of data fields.

31. The free text search system of claim 30 wherein the plurality of data fields includes a field indicating a start time of a crawl.

32. The free text search system of claim 30 wherein the data received from the crawler is stored as a text string in one of the plurality of fields.

33. The free text search system of claim 29 wherein the user interface includes a selection component to select fields in the business data database to index.

34. The free text search system of claim 33 wherein the user interface includes a selection component to select a pause rate between accessing two of the plurality of records.

35. The free text search system of claim 34 wherein the user interface comprises a plurality of predetermined pause rate modes that are selectable by the user.

36. The free text search system of claim 34 wherein the user interface comprises an input area where the user can input a specific pause rate.

37. The free text search system of claim 29 wherein the user interface further comprises an area for the user to enter a search query.

38. The free text search system of claim 37 wherein the user interface further comprises an area for the user to select specific fields of the business data database to search.

39. The free text search system of claim 37 wherein the user interface further comprises a display area to display results of a search.

40. The free text search system of claim 29 wherein the speed control module further comprises:

a monitoring component to monitor a load on the business data database; and

wherein the speed control module adjusts the pause rate of the crawler in response the monitored load on the business data database.

41. The free text search system of claim 40 wherein the speed control module increases the pause rate if the monitored load exceeds a first threshold load.

42. The free text search system of claim 41 wherein the speed control module increases the pause rate if the monitored load is less than a second threshold load.